

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-18 are pending in the present application.

Applicants' attorney, Mark Garscia, conducted a telephone interview with Examiners Alex Mok and Karl Tamai. Applicants' attorney and the Examiners discussed differences between the support element, positive locking elements and radial webs as claimed in the present application and the structures disclosed in the applied prior art. Applicants' attorney and the Examiners could not reach an agreement. Applicants' attorney would like to thank the Examiners for their time and efforts in conducting the interview.

Claims 1, 2, 5, 11, 14, and 18 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Muller, et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,007,390) in view of Sesselmann, et al. (PCT Publication No.: WO 120753 A1). Claim 1 has been amended to recite the support element comprising a plurality of radial webs having positive locking elements located on the radial webs, wherein the radial webs are spaced apart at the outer circumference of the support element. Claim 1 has been further amended to recite that the positive locking elements of the radial webs extend from the radial webs towards the housing and engaging in the recesses of the housing. In contrast, Muller et al. and Sesselmann et al. do not teach or suggest the noted limitations of claim 1.

Referring to FIG. 3 of Muller et al., the stator bedplate 68 is riveted between the outer edges 74, 75 of two casing shells 72, 73. Two of the rivets 76, 77 arranged around the periphery are visible in FIG. 3. Muller et al. also discloses that the stator bedplate is punched out of a solid plastic plate (*Col. 2, lines 57-58*). Muller et al., however, does not teach or suggest that the stator bedplate 68 has a plurality of radial webs, wherein the radial webs are spaced apart at the outer circumference of the bedplate. The stator bedplate of Muller et al. is a plate that is punched out from a solid plastic plate. Additionally, Muller et al. does not disclose that the bedplate has positive locking elements located on the radial webs which engage in the recesses of the housing.

The casing shells 72 and 73 of Muller et al. are brought together to hold the bedplate 68, which is then secured to the casing shells 72 and 73 with rivets.

Sesselmann et al. also fails to teach or suggest a support element comprising a plurality of radial webs having positive locking elements located on the radial webs, wherein the radial webs are spaced apart at the outer circumference of the support element, and that the positive locking elements of the radial webs extend from the radial webs towards the housing and engaging in the recesses of the housing. As shown in FIG. 1a of Sesselmann et al., none of the parts shown includes a plurality of radial webs having the positive locking elements as recited in claim 1.

As described above, Muller et al. and Sesselmann et al. do not teach or suggest a support element comprising a plurality of radial webs having positive locking elements located on the radial webs, wherein the radial webs are spaced apart at the outer circumference of the support element, and that the positive locking elements of the radial webs extend from the radial webs towards the housing and engaging in the recesses of the housing. Therefore, claim 1 and dependent claims 5, 2, 11 and 14 are patentable over Muller et al. in view of Sesselmann et al..

Regarding the rejection of claim 18, Applicants have amended this claim to recite the support element comprising a plurality of radial webs having radially directed end ribs located on outer ends of the radial webs, wherein the radial webs are spaced apart at the outer circumference of the support element. Claim 18 has been further amended to recite the radially directed end ribs of the radial webs engaging in the recesses of the housing. As discussed above, both Muller et al. and Sesselmann et al. fail to teach or suggest a support element having radial webs that are spaced apart at the outer circumference of the support element. Additionally Muller et al. and Sesselmann et al. do not teach or suggest the radial webs having radially directed end ribs located on outer ends of the radial webs engaging in the recesses of the housing. Therefore, claim 18 is patentable over Muller et al. in view of Sesselmann et al..

Claims 3, 4, and 6-9 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Muller, et al. and Sesselmann, et al. as applied to claim 1, and further in view of Blanchard, et al. (U.S. Patent No.: 4,866,321.). Claim 3 has been amended to recite that the positive locking elements comprise

radially directed end ribs extending from of the radial webs and engaging in the recesses of the housing. In contrast, Blanchard et al. does not teach or suggest radially directed end ribs as recited in claim 1.

On page 5 of the Office action, the Examiner asserts that "Blanchard et al. discloses bolts/screws (reference numerals 36, 38) that are fastened at the ends of the stator assembly (see figure 5), in which the bolts can constitute the radially aligned end ribs." Referring to FIG. 5 of Blanchard et al., the bolt 38 and the spacer 36 are directed perpendicular to the stator 12. In contrast, claim 3 as amended recites that the positive locking elements comprise radially directed end ribs. The bolt 38 and spacer 36 of Blanchard et al. are not radially directed. Furthermore, the bolt 38 and the spacer 36 of Blanchard et al. cannot be positively locked to the housing end members 21 and 22 because securing the bolt 38 to the housing end members 21 and 22 requires the use of a nut (shown in FIG. 3 of Blanchard et al.). Therefore, because Blanchard et al. fails to teach or suggest radially directed end ribs extending from of the radial webs and engaging in the recesses of the housing, claims 3, 4, and 6-9 are patentable over Muller et al. in view of Sesselmann et al. and Blanchard et al..

Claim 10 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Muller, et al., and further in view of Sesselmann, et al., Blanchard, et al., and Watanabe, et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,357,272). Claim 10 has been amended to depend on claim 1 through intervening claims 9, 7, 6 and 3. Because claim 1 is patentable over Muller et al. in view of Sesselmann et al., claim 10 is also patentable over Muller et al. in view of Sesselmann et al.

Claims 12 and 16 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Muller, et al., and further in view of Sesselmann, et al., Blanchard, et al., and Murakami, et al. (U.S. Patent Application Pub. No. US 2001/0040067 A1). Claim 12 has been amended to depend on claim 1 through intervening claims 6 and 3. Because claim 1 is patentable over Muller et al. in view of Sesselmann et al., claim 12 and dependent claim 16 are also patentable over Muller et al. in view of Sesselmann et al.

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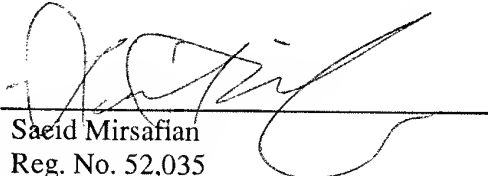
Claim 17 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Muller, et al., Sesselmann, et al., Blanchard, et al., and Murakami, et al. as applied to claims 12 and 16, and further in view of Niki, et al. (Japanese Patent Document No. JP 2001069722 A). Claim 13 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Muller, et al. and Sesselmann, et al. as applied to claim 1, and further in view of Bustamante, et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,982,058). Claim 15 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Muller, et al. and Sesselmann, et al. as applied to claims 1 and 14, and further in view of Niki, et al. (Japanese Patent Document No. JP 2001069722 A). Because claim 1 is patentable over Muller et al. in view of Sesselmann et al., claims 13, 15 and 17 are also patentable over Muller et al. in view of Sesselmann et al. and the additional references applied to the rejection of these claims.

In view of the amendments and remarks as set forth above, the application is thought to be in condition for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

CHRISTIE, PARKER & HALE, LLP

By


Saeid Mirsafian
Reg. No. 52,035
626/795-9900

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